

Key Points in meeting Phased Occupancy and Construction Projects Compliance

- Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO) is issued at the discretion of the Department per GS 153A-363. TCO may be issued to permit occupancy for a stated period for specified portions of the building that the inspector finds may safely be occupied before completion of the entire building. TCO is allowed only for Commercial building and structures.
- A TCO is not issued just for stocking furniture and materials only. It is for occupancy for a specific time and space within a building structure; however, fixed furniture requiring electrical connections and shown on the plans in the scope of work can be installed prior to TCO approval (i.e. office cubicles / work stations).
- A phased occupancy plan must be submitted to the building plans examiners. It must detail a plan of action to safely occupy portions of the new building and, in some cases, of existing buildings that were not permitted as phased construction.
- Special inspections must be signed off prior to requesting a TCO inspection for a project that requires Special inspections (SI).
- Contractors must ensure that all “holds” are released on their project before a TCO can be given (i.e. holds from Department of Transportation, Health Department, Zoning, Urban Forestry, Department of Labor, etc.)
- The contractor must obtain a TCO and Placard before stocking a building, which includes furnishings such desks, chairs, file cabinets, movable shelving, etc.
- The permit must be posted and the approved set of plans must be on the job site and accessible to the Code Officials for TCO inspections.
- The Permanent address must be posted on the building.
- Construction materials and debris must be removed from all areas in which a TCO is requested.
- Sidewalks leading to occupied areas must be completed.
- The contractor must have approved sprinkler plans on site. The inspector will perform a visual inspection of all sprinkler heads to assure that the heads are unobstructed.
- Hand rails must be installed on steps / stairways, handicapped ramps, and landings (if required).
- The exterior of a building, including the roof, must be completed prior to TCO inspections.
- If a fire alarm system is installed, a letter certifying that the system is in working order must be presented to both the Building Code Official and the Fire Marshal.
- A visual inspection and test of the fire alarm system will be performed for the project.
- All life safety system must be installed and tested prior to anyone other than contractors entering the space or stocking the building. If applicable, a Fire Sprinkler certification letter from the sprinkler installer must be provided. A fire alarm certification letter from the installer and an emergency lighting certification letter from the electrical contractor must be provided that indicates the lighting is operational and backup power has been tested.
- Electrical rooms must be clearly identified.
- Electrical penetration must be fire stopped.
- Soil reports must be available for review by the Building Code Official.
- If fire shutters are installed, the fire shutters must be tested and a field report provided to the Building Code Official.
- All elevators indicated in the scope of work must be installed and operational with NC Department of Labor approval.
- Contractors should contact inspector in advance to see if any items that are not completed would hold or prevent the issuance of a TCO. The above list is not meant to be a complete list for all jobs. Advanced review with the inspectors is required.
- Please note: All open trades must sign off with at least a TCO approval inspection. All holds must be released and contractor must obtain TCO document control before temporary occupancy will be allowed.